

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 046 524

PS 004 221

TITLE Learning into the Twenty-First Century. 1970 White House Conference on Children, Report of Forum 5. (Working Copy).

INSTITUTION Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE 70

NOTE 26p.

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29

DESCRIPTORS \*Educational Change, \*Educational Innovation, \*Educational Needs, Educational Philosophy, Educational Technology, Experimental Schools, \*Learning, \*Teacher Education, Television

### ABSTRACT

In this nation, the right to learn what there is to be learned has been denied because of prejudices and adherence to unproductive teaching techniques. There has been too little acceptance of advanced practices. Federally funded experimental schools must be initiated as alternatives to present learning modes and for the development of exemplar models of philosophy and practice. Learning must become an end in itself, an individual choice, implying an individual definition of success. Modern technology will be implemented for flexible scheduling and progress rates. Acknowledging the growing emphasis on television in the home, the forum suggests each home could house computers and microfilm libraries. "School" will focus on human interaction and the ability to know oneself. Teachers will be engaged in preparing computerized lessons, evaluating programs, and counseling; therefore, funds must be allocated for redesign of teacher education. The achievement of this program means commitment backed by resources and action. The report recommends massive expenditures of federal funds for the development of forward-looking practices and learning options and suggests that the nation's 200th birthday, 1976, be made an occasion for nationwide dialogue about our whole learning situation. (AJ)

ED046524

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

**EMBARGO**

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL 12 NOON  
DECEMBER 8, 1970

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE  
PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS  
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
POSITION OR POLICY.

## LEARNING INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Report of Forum 5

1970 White House Conference on Children

PS004221

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

## SUMMARY

The right to learn includes the right to know what is to be learned and the right to learn the ways of knowing. But this fundamental right has been denied to many in our nation -- out of both prejudices and mindless adherence to unproductive teaching concepts and practices.

The subject matter of today's schools is both narrow and antiseptic: we ignore and denigrate the rich variations in our culture and we paint pretty, half-real pictures of life for our children. We have adhered to the outworn notion that certain subjects are to be learned by all children at successive stages of growth at stipulated times and in sterile places.

All our old answers and remedies have failed: the overall failure of our school systems is glaringly apparent in dropout rates, minimal learning rates by many who remain, and growing alienation of all our young. At the core of the failure is denial of diversity.

The task of change that lies ahead is truly massive. We no longer have the luxury of knowing our children will live in a society similar to our own and of preparing them for it. Although we cannot predict the world our children will inhabit in the twenty-first century, we can predict that man will still be struggling to assert truly human values in a technological society and to develop a healthy relationship with his environment.

We would have the man of the twenty-first century be a man with a strong sense of himself, his humanness, his worth, and his potential. The education he will need must be an enabling

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

process -- opening the whole world to him. Learning will be an end in itself. Ages and specific times for learning will be meaningless. Modern technology will be integral, teaching the formalities and freeing teachers and children to come together for higher literacy that goes beyond the Three R's. The range of educational options from which to chose will be immense.

Achieving this demands a moral commitment backed by resources and action. We therefore recommend a massive infusion of government funds for experiments in learning to:

- Develop experimental schools as alternatives to present learning modes
- Reconstruct selected existing schools to demonstrate advanced practices
- Develop existing and new "free" schools into exemplar models of philosophy and practice
- Create learning options outside the educational system as alternatives to conventional schooling.

We also recommend that this nation's 200th birthday in 1976 be made the occasion for a nationwide dialogue about our entire learning enterprise.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

#### CURRENT STATUS

The right to learn embraces the right to know what lies ready to be learned and the right to learn the ways of knowing. It means for each individual the right to learn what he needs, in his own way and at his own rate, in his own place and time.

In a nation that speaks of inalienable rights, the right to learn must be paramount. Yet that right, in its full meaning, has been denied to many in this nation. It has been denied because of color and religion, because of poverty and infirmity, and because of place of abode. And it has been denied because of our mindless adherence to unproductive teaching concepts and practices.

The right to learn is the goal we set for the twenty-first century. We want for our children a range of learning opportunities as broad as the unknown range of their talents -- and a learning environment that nurtures those talents. We want our children to know themselves and, secure in that knowledge, to open themselves to others. We want them to have freedom, and the order, justice, and peace that the preservation of their freedom demands.

Yet we scarcely know the meaning of these grand words let alone how to give them body and substance. Clearly, then, we must engage in great experiments, joyful experiments encouraging alternatives and diversity throughout what must become a much

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

more varied and comprehensive educational system. For merely to tinker, to patch and paste, without bringing about fundamental change, will be to invite disaster.

The alternative is reconstruction:

- The reconstruction of existing schools
- The creation of new schools, free of the present system
- Above all, the expansion of "school" into the world.

The primary data for those who would seek to expedite children's learning are the children themselves. The primary data for the child are self and mankind.

Achieving the goal we seek brings us to the profound questions of what and how to learn. Schools and teachers have been with us for so long that we now equate them with education and, worse, with learning. The infant learns to walk and to talk, to trust and to distrust; he learns fear and love and hate -- all without benefit of school. The tragic irony is that we know all this and still equate learning with school. By age five, the child has sat before a television set for at least the number of hours he will spend in the first three grades of school. And still we equate learning with school.

The first step toward achieving our goal -- a difficult step for some of us -- is acceptance of what should be obvious: school is but a part of the learning environment. Until recently, we believed that it was the most powerful part of that environment;

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

we now know that it is not. But school is still the formal instrument created explicitly for educating our young. Its answers to the questions of what and how to learn have both reflected national strengths and weaknesses and contributed to their formation.

Today, as in the past, the subject matter of learning is both narrow and antiseptic. Those who select and prescribe it do so through the biases of their Western culture, denying to the young the richness of African, Asiatic, or Latin American heritages. The exciting variations of our own black and brown and yellow and red cultures are ignored and implicitly denigrated at an inestimable cost to all our children.

The full extent of the denial of the right to learn is even greater, however; for we paint and show only pretty pictures of life, out of deference, supposedly, to the tenderness of children. In so doing, we magnify our hypocrisy for all to see. Even the youngest of our offspring soon become aware that we wage war while talking peace, that children go hungry in the richest land on the face of the earth, that even leaders cheat and lie. They come to understand that what we say and what we do are very different things. With the uncluttered vision of children, they see the gap between rhetoric and reality.

What is to be learned is refined by our filtering system until, too often, it defrauds or cheats the learner and leaves

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

little learning with the power to grip him. From the truly exciting possibilities of a culture embracing mankind -- of a conscience embracing mankind -- we slide to the homogenized "adventures" of Dick and Jane and a field trip to the supermarket.

With regard to the "how" of learning, we have only begun to question the outworn notion that certain subjects or concepts are to be learned by all individuals, at successive stages of growth, at stipulated times, in sterile places. Reading is for the first grade, long division for the fourth, and fractions for the fifth and sixth. All this takes place between the hours of nine and three in a big box divided into cells. Preschool prepares for adjustment to the first box, and six or seven years in that box prepares for adjustment to a next, larger box.

In this lockstep, as in so many other ways, we teach that each phase of life is instrumental to the next rather than of ultimate value in itself. We see the man we want the child to become rather than the child seeking to become himself. In the words of Hannah Arendt, "Man sees wood in every tree." Perhaps this is one reason why more than half of all Americans over the age of fifty say that they find their lives to be disappointing, unrewarding, unfulfilling, and find, when they come to die, that they "never had lived at all."

This is the winter of our educational discontent. Until recently, we believed that we had only to inject some new subject



(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

matter here, a heavier dose of phonics there, tighten the discipline a little, to improve both the system and society. Better schools (defined in largely quantitative terms) would mean more jobs, a brisker economy, safer cities, and more aware and dedicated citizens. Or so we thought. Dwindling confidence in these relationships reflects both declining confidence in the schools and the tenacity with which we cling to the "learning equals school" equation. Painfully, we are coming to realize that grades predict grades, that success in school begets success in more school but is no guarantee of good workers, committed citizens, happy mothers and fathers, or compassionate human beings.

The schools have been poked and probed, judged and weighed -- and found wanting. For a brief span of years, we believed that the sickness spread only through the schools of our great cities. Increasingly, however, we have come to understand that suburban and, to an even greater degree, rural schools do not assure the diet nor provide the vitality our children deserve. Even the middle-class school around the corner reveals ragged edges surrounding a soft center. The overall failure is glaringly apparent in dropout rates, in barely minimal learning on the part of many who do remain in school, and in growing alienation among the young of all colors and classes.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

At the root of the problem is an implicit denial of diversity. The schools have become great sorting machines, labeling and certifying those who presumably will be winners and losers as adults. The winners are disproportionately white and affluent; the losers, too often, poor, and brown or black or red.

But many of the winners are losers, too. For they are shaped, directed, and judged according to a narrow conception of what is proper. This process begins very early; the environment of expectations, rewards, and punishments is established before mother and child leave the hospital. And in the home, infants are encouraged in their efforts to walk and talk, but their responses to sound, color, and smell are ignored or stifled. This process of channeling energy and talent is refined and perfected in the schools through a network of expectations, rules, grades, required subjects, and rewards for what is wanted and the subtle extinction of the great range of talents and achievements which are not wanted.

Do we paint an unduly dark picture? Perhaps, for sunny islands of contrasting practice are known to us all. But careful study and reflection reveal that the contrasting examples are, indeed, islands in an otherwise grey sea. Those few must be tended and nurtured because of their precious rarity and their potentiality for guiding change.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

A massive task of change lies ahead. We cannot take joy from these islands of success while we kill at home and abroad. We cannot point pridefully at those who have "made it" while half of us believe that life has passed us by. We cannot rejoice with our sons and daughters when their brothers and sisters do not graduate with them. We cannot congratulate ourselves on our talents when half of our talents have withered or died.

The inflated rhetoric we have used in describing our accomplishments far exceeds their nature and extent. Among many of our people there is a sense of outrage induced by the discrepancy between what is and what could be. We share that outrage. Thankfully, however, not all our energies are used up in anger. We have more than a little hope that a new era can be both described and created. At the core of this hope is a fresh awareness of children: of their intrinsic rather than instrumental value, of their ability to learn, and of the kind of learning they could and should have going into the twenty-first century.

Other generations believed that they had the luxury of preparing their children to live in a society similar to their own. The primary -- although seldom attained -- aim of education was thus to transmit the existing culture to the young. Ours is the first generation to have achieved the Socratic wisdom of knowing that we do not know the world in which our children will live.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

Although the year 2000 is only thirty years in the future, we cannot truly envisage it and the range of demands it will impose on twenty-first-century man.

To speak as we have in the past of giving our young the "tools" with which to survive, to speak of techniques and subjects" as the essential components of education, is to speak of trivialities. And it is to send our children unequipped into the unknowable.

For all that we can predict with certainty is that the central issue of the twenty-first century, as it is of this one, will be the struggle to assert truly human values and to achieve their ascendancy in a mass, technological society. It will be the struggle to place man in a healthy relationship with his natural environment; to place him in command of, rather than subservient to, the wondrous technology he is creating; and to give him the breadth and depth of understanding which can result in the formation of a world culture, embracing and nurturing within its transcending characteristics the diverse cultures of the world of today.

We ask first, then, not what kind of education we want to provide but what kind of human being we want to emerge. What would we have twenty-first-century man be?

We would have him be a man with a strong sense of himself and his own humanness, with awareness of his thoughts and feelings, with the capacity to feel and express love and joy and to recognize tragedy and feel grief. We would have him be a man who, with a strong and realistic sense of his own worth, is able to

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

relate openly with others, to cooperate effectively with them toward common ends, and to view mankind as one while respecting diversity and difference. We would want him to be a being who, even while very young, somehow senses that he has it within himself to become more than he now is, that he has the capacity for lifelong spiritual and intellectual growth. We would want him to cherish that vision of the man he is capable of becoming and to cherish the development of the same potentiality in others.

The education of this kind of human being is necessarily an enabling process rather than an instructional process. It requires opening the whole of the world to the learner and giving him easy access to that world. This implies enormous respect for the child's capacity to learn, and with the granting of respect goes, by implication, the granting of freedom.

#### LEARNING IN THE YEAR 2000

When we look to education in the century to come, we see learning not as a means to some end but as an end in itself. Education will not be an imitation of life, but life examined and enjoyed. A prescribed age for beginning to learn -- or for ceasing to learn -- will be meaningless. So will age as a criterion for determining what needs to be learned. And so will the standard school day and academic year.

Compulsory education -- or compulsory attendance, as it might better be called -- will be a thing of the past. School

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

as we now know it, will have been replaced by a diffuse learning environment involving homes, parks, public buildings, museums, business offices, and guidance centers. Many such resources that are now unofficial, unrecognized, unstructured, or unsupervised -- and unused -- will be endorsed and made fully available for learning. There will be successors to our present schools -- places designed for people to gather for purposes of learning things together.

Children and their families will be responsible for setting educational goals and mapping the route toward them. Plentiful assistance and advice will be available, if desired, in planning highly flexible and individualized schemes for learning, but it will be left to the learner and, when he is very young, his family, to choose among the alternatives.

The very availability of a great range of options will represent what we believe will be an important, and essential, change in our national value system. "Success" will have been redefined, and a wide range of studies, tastes, careers, and "life styles" will be legitimized and praiseworthy. Boys will not be made to feel that they must grow up to be aggressive -- or even affluent -- men. Girls will not need to feel that domesticity is the necessary be-all and end-all of their existence; a career in science will not have higher status than a career in the creative arts. We will, in short, give substance to our longstanding but never fulfilled commitment to honor and develop the entire range of human talent.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

Modern technology will help us realize our goals. The profound significance of the computer, when properly used in learning, is that it introduces an entirely new source of energy into the educational process. It is energy which is not affected by the night before, by viruses, or by unmanageable children. Subjects missed this year can be picked up next year. Single subjects can be pursued intensively for periods of time governed only by the whim of the learner. The fifty-year-old need not humble himself by going back to school with twelve-year-olds in order to get what he wants. He may go directly to the energy system, which is not aware of age, color, origin of birth, place, or time of day.

It is possible that advanced technology will return the family to center stage as the basic learning unit. Each home could become a school, in effect, connected via an electronic console to a central educational computer system, a computer-regulated videotape and microfilm library, and a national educational television network. Whether at home or elsewhere, each student will have, at the touch of a button, access to a comprehensive "learning package," including printed lessons, experiments to be performed, recorded information, videotaped lectures, and films.

The moment so much teaching energy is made available throughout the twenty-four-hour span of the day to all individuals at any place, school need no longer be what we have known it to be. It may be used for other functions not fully recognized until now. It will be the place where human beings come together,

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

not for the formalities of learning subject matter, but for the higher literacy going far beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic.

And so the schools of the twenty-first century, by whatever name they are known, will continue to play a major role in advancing insight and knowledge. But these "school learnings" will focus more on developing man's ability to know himself and to relate to others. We expect that students will come together to speak and to listen, but in a greater variety of ways than they now do in schools. Heavier stress will be laid on learning different forms of rationality and logic and on dealing with crisis and conflict. The individual will be helped to develop a greater consciousness of his thoughts and feelings, so that he may feel and experience life and at the same time "stand outside" his immediate experience. For twenty-first-century man would be a sentient being with both the freedom that comes from understanding and the accompanying control of impulse. The schools of the twenty-first century will also have as part of their "curriculum" helping the young to understand their own antecedents, as they do today, but in infinitely more direct and vital ways.

In such an educational world everyone will be, from time to time, both teacher and learner, but there will still be great need for teachers who, for the first time, will be free to engage in truly human tasks. No longer will they need to function as ineffective machines imparting "facts" by rote -- real machines will have taken over that function. Some will spend many hours preparing a single lesson, to be viewed by thousands or even millions of individuals of all ages; others will evaluate such



(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

instructional programs. Some will staff counseling centers. Others will be engaging with groups of all ages in dialogue designed to enhance human communication and understanding.

The entire educational enterprise will be directed toward increasing the freedom and the power of the individual to shape himself, to live at ease in his community, and, in doing so, to experience self-fulfillment.

#### FROM TODAY INTO TOMORROW

We have sketched a kind of learning Utopia; achieving it will not be easy. In fact, without massive, thoughtful, social reconstruction, we will not get there at all. To stand aside -- unconcerned, uncommitted, and unresolved -- may very well be to assure no twenty-first century, and, least of all, our Utopia.

The first step is moral commitment. Like all moral commitments, it must be backed by resources and action. There is much talk these days about reordering national priorities. We add our voices to the millions seeking life-giving rather than death-dealing, conservation rather than the wanton pillaging of our resources, and the freeing and nurturing of the human spirit rather than the proliferation and worship of material objects. We sound a special call for full and genuine commitment to the right to learn.

The signal announcing this commitment will be the long-awaited injection of large-scale government funds into learning: for encouraging experimentation in existing schools, for the creation of experimental schools, and for transcending the schools

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

by bringing new learning into them and taking children to the range of resources outside them. For a time, at least, we must infuse these funds as though we were at war -- because we are at war -- with ignorance, prejudice, injustice, intolerance, and all those forces crippling and restricting young and old alike.

The first phase of reconstruction involves the schools we have. Supposedly, the decade of the sixties was one of school reform: in the curriculum, in the organization of school and classroom, and in instruction. But recent studies reveal that the appearance of change far outruns the actuality of change.

Despite emphasis on the need for identifying goals, few schools have a clear sense of direction. Despite the obvious futility of "teaching" the world's knowledge, schools still emphasize the learning of facts rather than how to learn. Despite this golden era of instructional materials and children's literature, the textbook is still the prime medium of instruction. Despite gaining knowledge about individual differences in learning, what children are to learn is still laid out by grades, years, months, and even days. Despite increased insight into how learning occurs, teaching is still largely telling and questioning. In a diverse, complex society, our schools demonstrate almost monolithic conformity and enormous resistance to change; close scrutiny reveals a deepseated impotence, an inability to come to grips with the acknowledged problems.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

The top agenda item, then, in seeking to enhance learning in the seventies, is unshackling the schools. The process must begin by decentralizing authority and responsibility for instructional decision-making to individual schools. Simply dividing large school districts into smaller districts is not the answer. Schools, like individuals, are different: in size, problems, clientele, and types of communities served -- they must create programs appropriate to their local circumstances. Many schools are not ready to take quick advantage of such sudden freedoms. Too long fettered by the larger system, their staffs will be timid and uncertain.

We recommend, therefore, that substantial federal funds be allocated for the deliberate development of schools whose sole reason for being is experimental. Designed to provide alternatives, such schools could provide options in the community and thus would attract a more supportive parent group. In time, such schools would provide models for replication in networks of cooperating schools seeking to learn from each other.

Such schools need not arise solely within "the system." The need to break out of established patterns has never been more critical. We need alternatives wherever we can find them. Some of the "free" schools springing up around the country offer diversity and should be encouraged to the point where their practices truly reflect their underlying philosophies.

We urge that schools be given support for abolishing the grade levels, developing new evaluation procedures, using the full range of community resources for learning, automating certain

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

kinds of learning, exploring instructional techniques for developing self-awareness and creative thinking, rescheduling the school year, and more. Most of all, we urge that substantial financial support for schools seeking to redesign their entire learning environment, from the curriculum through the structure of the school to completely new instructional procedures.

Especially needed are well-developed models of early learning. We know now that the first five years of life largely determine the characteristics of the young adult. Yet, we fail these years shamefully either through neglect, through narrow, thoughtless shaping, or through erratic shifts from too little to too much concern. Ample evidence supports the charge that commercial interests exploit the indiscriminate drive of many Americans to ensure that their children are well-prepared for school. There is also abundant evidence that millions of parents fail to provide their children with the guidance, support, and social and intellectual skills they need for productive independence.

Two successive administrations have promised and failed to deliver on a national effort for expansion and improvement in the education of young children. A National Laboratory in Early Childhood Education suffered a crippled birth under one administration and is now starving to death under another. We need research on what we now know; thousands of adequately prepared teachers to staff nursery and play schools; and exemplar models of programs stressing cognitive, aesthetic, motor, and affective development.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

High on our list of "old business" is the overhaul of teacher education from top to bottom. The continuing debate over the value of "methods" courses, whether to have more or fewer of them, and how to regulate teacher education by legislative fiat only reveals the poverty of our approaches to the problem. Shuffling courses about is not the answer. Required are strategies which take account of the fact that pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher education, and the schools themselves, are dependent, interrelated, and interacting components of one social system.

It becomes apparent, therefore, that financial resources must be directed toward those strategies that link schools seeking to change with teacher education institutions seeking to shake out of established patterns. The teacher for tomorrow's learning must be prepared in school settings endeavoring to create a new kind of tomorrow; most of today's teachers are prepared for yesterday's schools.

The tasks for the seventies may not have the heady appeal of the slogans for the sixties but they have a meaty substance about them, an "action" appeal for students, teachers, parents, private foundations, and all levels of government. Those who prefer doing to talking should find challenge enough in simultaneously redesigning the schools we have, creating alternative models, and arranging for teachers to find their role in these new settings for learning.

But we need not wait for the 1980's to get a good start on other components of our visions for 2000. In fact, some

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

roots already are taking hold. School, however reformed, is but one of the child's resources for learning. Children spend more time, perhaps learn more, for better or for worse, in the electronic embrace of television. Television, however, is but one of several powerful teachers of the electronic genre. The computer has even greater potential because of its ability to coordinate an array of devices: filmed or videotaped cartridges, records, graphic symbols, paper printouts, and responsive surfaces -- devices for sight, sound, touch, and even smell.

We must stop talking about the possibilities and engage in experimentation on a much broader scale. To date, educational television has teetered on the brink of disaster, its limp fare failing to compete with commercial products, especially advertising. Sesame Street demonstrates vigorously that this need not be. It also demonstrates that successful use of television for desirable learning by children requires substantial financial backing -- for air time, for production, for evaluation and especially for research into what constitutes appropriate subject matter. Ten years from now, initial use of television to teach children numbers and the alphabet will probably appear primitive.

One of the major tasks involved in bringing electronics productively into children's learning involves a kind of research, namely, determining appropriate roles for human and machine teachers. The cant of audio-visual education insists that equipment be only an extension of human teachers. For computers, for example, to be mere aids of human teachers is to cripple both. We must recognize the fact that electronic devices constitute a

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

new kind of instructional energy -- indefatigable, relatively immune to changes in the weather, and contemptuous of time of day or day of week. The human teacher, on the other hand, is sharply limited in energy pattern, highly susceptible to chills, immobile in times of flood and snow, and sensitive to time of day. Clearly, the tasks for human and machine teachers should be both differentiated and complementary.

When we come to recognize fully the characteristics and possibilities of electronic energy, most of the "givens" of schooling collapse. Learning need not take place in a box, from nine to three each day, five days a week, 180 days per year. There need not be a school beginning at age five, a graded school, or a "balance" of subjects throughout the day. Nothing need be "missed" because of absence for it can be picked up tomorrow by asking the machine to retrieve whatever is wanted. Something resembling a school -- and this something might take many forms -- is needed for those important human activities of interaction, exploration, and finding one's self through others.

Experimentation is needed, beginning now and continuing unabated into the twenty-first century, to create and legitimize options for schooling. Soon it will be common practice to show a variety of cassette tapes through a home television set. CATV promises a new set of options. And just behind both of these developments lies the home computer television terminal plugged into several video outlets, capable of playing its own records and cassettes, and providing printouts of the learning and

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

cultural options currently available in the community. Taking advantage of these alternatives must be accepted and encouraged.

One way for us to begin to grow accustomed to this non-school freedom is to use the learning resources lying outside school much more vigorously. Children should be excused from school for blocks of time to gain access to a non-school teacher, to serve as apprentice to an artisan, or to practice a hobby in depth. The biggest block to the kind of learning future we describe is not its availability. It is our individual difficulty in shaking ourselves loose from the vice-like grip of our present stereotyped thinking. Let us begin simply, with the young man who wrote, "All the world is a school and you don't need permission slips to get out into the halls and everybody should exchange classrooms and, Hey! what about the lawns? . . ."

We had better begin now because we will need all our imagination and our wisdom to cope with some of the critical moral questions soon to be thrust upon us. We now know that drugs are being used deliberately, under medical supervision, to intervene in the learning processes of children. Electronic means are being used to assist in the treatment of childhood disorders. The field of biochemistry is breaking new ground in seeking to understand and improve learning processes. Independent of these activities, drug use, ranging from mild exploration to dangerous abuse, is now a fact of life. Who are to be judged deviant and needful of chemical or electronic treatment? What restraints are to be placed upon the use of drugs for educational, self-serving, or destructive purposes?



(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

And who is to make what decisions for whom? That question is probably the most pressing educational question both today and tomorrow. It is at the core of current discussions of accountability, voucher systems, and the like, in schooling. It is at the core of any minority group demands for self-determination and equality. Ultimately, it brings us into the matter of who owns the child and who is to determine his freedom. To return where we began, the right to learn means the freedom of each individual to learn what he needs in his own way and at his own rate, in his own place and time.

This interpretation of the right to learn will not be easily understood. Nor are we likely to come easily to full acceptance and support of the flexibility and experimentation required to design the future of learning. We urge our leaders at all levels to work toward public understanding and support. We recommend that celebration of this nation's 200th birthday in 1976 be taken as the occasion for a nationwide dialogue about, and assessment of, our entire learning enterprise. Such a theme would herald the placement of humane concerns at the top of our national priorities and would focus the eyes of our citizens on this accomplishment. The twenty million people expected to attend the year-long celebration could be given the opportunity to participate in a preview of the learning we have described for tomorrow.

We can think of no more appropriate celebration of the birth of a free nation than a domestic commitment to make real the most fundamental freedom: the right to learn.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

TENTATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS (FOR DISCUSSION)

1. We recommend massive infusion of government funds for the following types of learning experiments:
  - The development of experimental schools created for and evaluated solely as alternatives to present modes of learning
  - The reconstruction of selected existing schools to demonstrate forward-looking practices discussed but rarely implemented during the past decade
  - The development of some existing and new "free" schools into exemplar models clearly demonstrating relationships between philosophy and practice
  - The creation of learning options outside the educational system as alternatives to schooling as we now know it.
2. We recommend that celebration of this nation's 200th birthday in 1976 be made the occasion for a nationwide dialogue about our entire learning enterprise. Such a theme could herald the placement of humane concerns at the top of our national priorities. The twenty million people expected to attend the year-long celebration would be given the opportunity to participate in many aspects of the learning we recommend for tomorrow.

(THIS IS A WORKING COPY - SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION.)

FORUM #5 MEMBERS

John Goodlad (Chairman)

John E. Codwell (Vice Chairman)

John Terry Borton

Charlotte Carr

James Cass

Evelyn Cohelan

Thomas F. Cribbin

Nathaniel R. Dixon

Harvey Haber

Mary Hillaire

Lyle Hanson

Leonard Press

Enrique S. Rivera-Torres

Ole Sand

J. Bradley Williams

Louise Eckerson (Coordinator)

Cathie Price (Coordinator)